

REMARKS

In response to the action of January 21, 2010, applicants ask that all claims be allowed in view of the amendments to the claims and the following remarks. Claims 13-15, 17-19, and 21-34 are pending, of which claims 13, 32, and 33 are independent. Claims 13, 32, and 33 have been amended.

§ 101 Rejections

Claims 13-15, 17-19, 21-31, and 34 have been rejected as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Claim 13 has been amended. Applicants submit that the amendments to claim 13 address all of the issues raised in the Office Action. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

§ 103 Rejections

Claims 13-15, 17-19, 21, 22 and 25-34 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Mahoney (U.S. Patent No. 5,563,991) in view of Guzelsu (U.S. Patent No. 6,381,587) and Albazz (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0046081), and claims 23 and 24 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Mahoney in view of Guzelsu, Albazz, and Kennedy (U.S. Patent No. 6,031,547). Based on the following remarks, withdrawal of the rejections and further examination are respectfully requested.

Referring to particular claim language, independent claim 13, as amended, recites a method comprising, inter alia, after a shell document has been completed by both a first independent agency and a second independent agency, using at least one computer that includes a processor to identify service providers that have been pre-qualified to provide services included in the completed shell document and post the completed shell document to home pages of the pre-qualified service providers that are separate from the secure collaboration space such that designated employees of the pre-qualified service providers perceive the completed shell document upon next logging into the relationship-management system.

Independent claims 32 and 33, although different in scope from claim 13 and each other, recite features similar to those discussed above with respect to independent claim 13.

The applied references are not seen to disclose, teach or suggest the foregoing features recited by the independent claims. In particular, the applied references fail to disclose at least identifying service providers that have been pre-qualified to provide services included in a completed shell document and posting the completed shell document to home pages of the pre-qualified service providers that are separate from the secure collaboration space in such that designated employees of the pre-qualified service providers perceive the completed shell document upon next logging into the relationship-management system.

Specifically, the Office Action indicates that Mahoney and Guzelsu fail to describe or suggest features of the independent claims that relate to the shell document. Instead, the Office Action relies on Albazz for these features.

Albazz describes a system that controls contractual activities executed pursuant to a contract. See Albazz at Abstract. Specifically, the Albazz system provides a secure site in which a buyer and seller directly negotiate terms of a contract. See Albazz at FIGS. 7 and 8 and paragraph [0094]. Although the Albazz system provides a secure site that facilitates contract negotiation between a buyer and a seller, the Albazz system does not identify service providers that have been pre-qualified to provide services included in a completed shell document and post the completed shell document to home pages of the pre-qualified service providers that are separate from a secure collaboration space in which the shell document was completed by both a first independent agency and a second independent agency. Rather, the Albazz system provides a single, secure site where the buyer and the seller both come together to negotiate a contract. Therefore, applicants submit that Albazz fails to describe or suggest, after a shell document has been completed by both a first independent agency and a second independent agency, using at least one computer that includes a processor to identify service providers that have been pre-qualified to provide services included in the completed shell document and post the completed shell document to home pages of the pre-qualified service providers that are separate from the secure collaboration space such that designated employees of the pre-qualified service providers perceive the completed shell document upon next logging into the relationship-management system, as recited in the amended independent claims.

Accordingly, for at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 13, 32, and 33.

The other rejected claims in the application are each dependent on these independent claims and are thus believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each claim is deemed to define additional aspects of the disclosure, however, the individual consideration of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

It is believed that all of the pending issues have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this reply should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this reply, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance. Please apply any charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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